

Story 1397 (1989 Tape 6)

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Location: Konya, Konya
Province

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The Mistreated Guest of Allah¹

One day a man went to a certain village as the guest of Allah. In the old days hospitality was very important, and in each village there was a special room where a stranger might sleep and where he could expect to be served food. The man I am telling you about went to a village to stay in such a room.

Unfortunately the owner of the guest room was a very miserly man.² He did nothing to provide the guest with

¹In Turkey those asking for lodging for the night ask, "Will you accept me as the guest of Allah?" Such a request almost preempts a refusal, for few are willing to reject anyone who claims an association of any sort with the Deity.

²The narrator is not very well acquainted with village customs. Every village of any size is likely to have a guest room. It is referred to simply as The Room (Turkish: oda). Although there may be hundreds of rooms in houses in a given village, everyone knows the denotation of The Room. Sometimes the office of the muhtar (head man) by day, it can house a guest by night. It is not owned by one individual but is village property. The muhtar assigns the family whose turn it is to provide food for the guest during his stay. This kind of hospitality is very much alive today (1992) and is not a lost tradition of an earlier time.

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food. Because the stranger had traveled a great distance to reach that village, he was very hungry when he awakened in morning. Going to the owner he said, "I came to your guest room last night. I received no food then, but is there no food even this morning in this cursed room?"

The owner of the room then put some water in a small pot and placed it over the fire to heat. He kept stirring the water with a spoon, saying as he did so, "Boil, my meal, boil

Until the snow falls."

The guest replied, "Your elder will remain

Until the snow falls."

He meant by that that he was not going to go anywhere. But after waiting some time longer without any relief for his hunger, he said,

"Oh, our country! Ah, our country!

They probably sneaked a snack in the night!"

The room owner finally announced,

"The sirocco has blown,

And the breakfast has gone."

From that the guest understood that he was not going to receive any food. He therefore left that village immediately.